The Midnight-Cry:

A

SERMON

PREACHED

On the PARABLE

OF THE

TEN VIRGINS.

Watch therefore; for you know not the Day, nor the Hour, when the Son of Man cometh. St. Mark 13. 35.

By *J. M.* M. A. Rector of *W*——
in the County of *B*——.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.

The Fourth Edition, with the Addition of two Hymns [illegible] of Christ: *By the same Author.*

London, Printed for Nathanael Ranew, at the *King's Arms* in St. *Paul's* Church-Yard. 1692.

A SERMON

PREACHED

On the PARABLE

OF THE

TEN VIRGINS

20 11 05

The Epiſtle Dedicatory,

TO

All the ſincere Lovers of *Sion.*

THE *Apoſtle hath an Obſervation, that* they which ſleep, ſleep in the Night: *and the dreadful frame is ſuited to the ſtate of ignorant and benighted Souls; but that they* who are of the Day, (*though they* do not ſleep as do others) *ſhould ſlumber in the Light, is juſtly wonderful. The Spouſe ſaith,* ſhe ſlept, but her Heart waked: *but the ſadneſs of our caſe is, that our Hearts are aſleep.* When the Son of Man comes, *indeed,* ſhall he find Faith on the Earth? *As the People of God by Perſecution have been at their* Wits-end; *ſo by the long delay of Deliverance, they are almoſt at their* Faiths-end: *and they that have obtained Faith in the* Croſs, *find it difficult to attain to Faith in the* Kingdom. *It is worth a ſerious Enquiry, why the Doctrine of* Chriſt's Kingdom *hath met with ſo cold a Reception, eſpecially when as the* time of the End *draws near,* many have ran to and fro, (i. e. *by comparing Scripture with Scripture; for which the following Diſcourſe is ſo highly valuable*) and Knowledg *in theſe things* is much increaſed. *Our Blindneſs, I conceive, is but too much cauſed by the Duſt that hath been raiſed by ſome who have driven furiouſly in by-paths; amongſt whom I reckon thoſe moſt blame-worthy, who have advanced Phancy ſo far above Faith, as to run into carnal Notions of ſenſual Enjoyments, more ſuited to a Turkiſh Paradiſe, than the Kingdom of Chriſt: their Carnality hath made this Doctrine to grate in a Chriſtian's Ears, to whom one Hour's Communion with God, is preferred above all the Pleaſures that the World can afford. The next to theſe*

are they who have drawn, or wire-drawn, ſtrang Conſequences from this Doctrine, to eſtabliſh ſeditious Principles and Practices againſt the Powers that be; *whereby ſome have gone beyond* the filthy Dreamers, who deſpiſed Dominions and ſpake evil of Dignities. *To theſe we may adjoin ſome grea and good Men, of whoſe Works many have complained, that thy have darkned (inſtead of enlightning) their Eyes; when they have too confidently aſſerted the perſonal Preſence of Chriſt on Earth for a thouſand Years: whereas it is not ſaid that* Chriſt *ſhall reign with the* Saints, *but that* they ſhall reign with him *then, even* as they ſuffer with him *now: but eſpecially, when they have retended to determine* Day and Hour; *and ſo by their frequent Miſtakes and Diſappointments, have expoſed Themſelves and their Labours to Contempt. Let us then take the Doctrine as refined from all this Droſs, and it will appear pure Gold. The only doubt is, whether the aſſerting the* Nearneſs *of this bright Day, be not equivalent to a fixing the Day and Hour, and on the ſame Account dangerous. I humbly conceive that the Scripture doth abundantly make the difference; in which we are not only forbidden to pry into Secrets,* which the Father has in his own Power; *but we are commanded to go by Scripture-Signs: that as* no Man knows *the one,* viz. the Day and Hour; *ſo when* we ſee ſuch and ſuch things come to paſs, all may know *the other,* viz. *the* Nearneſs *of it. I deſire to be aſhamed of my own Darkneſs and Vileneſs, that I have not attained to that Evidence and Perſwaſion of our being* now come to the time of the End, *that I know ſome of the dear People of God have arrived unto: But I bleſs God for what I have ſeen, and I could wiſh I had words to declare it to the World, that they who live in the daily Expectation of the coming of Chriſt, are the moſt lively zealous Chriſtians, that ever I have known or heard of in theſe latter Days; the wonderful Impreſſions which they have upon their Spirits about it, are ſoul-raviſhing, inflaming their Hearts with Love to him: They are Soul-repleniſhing, that they even overflow and run over in all their Diſcourſe, with the moſt*

affectionate

affectionate ſpeaking of Chriſt, and for him; whereby they are rendred ſome of the moſt uſeful Saints upon Earth: and whereas all Enthuſiaſtical Opinions are wont to puff up, theſe Impreſſions have tended to make them the moſt humble and lowly Chriſtians that ever I came near. As the Generality of Chriſtians are without theſe Expectations, ſo by woful Experience we know how cold we are in our Hearts and Lives, in our Converſe and Families: We ſtand in need of the Notes of ſome Boanerges, *ſome ſuch awakening Diſcourſe as is here preſented to you. Though we come behind other Chriſtians, as to the* Plerophory *they are raiſed up to; yet by Grace we are aſſured,* that the Lord is not ſlack, as ſome count Slackneſs. *We abhor the Malignity of the Scoffers, that ſay,* Where is the Promiſe of his Coming? *We fully know,* that he that ſhall come, will come (*in his own time*) and will not tarry. *This is enough to rouſe us from our Security, and to make us prize a Diſcourſe that is more than ordinarily ſuited to the awakening of a drouſy World: This is enough to make us more fervent when we pray with the Church,* THAT THE KINGDOM OF THY DEAR SON MAY COME QUICKLY; AND THAT ALL HIS ENEMIES BEING MADE HIS FOOTSTOOL, HE WHO IS THE LORD OF LORDS, AND KING OF KINGS, MAY REIGN TO ALL THE ENDS OF THE EARTH. *Though I am engaged by Promiſe to ſay nothing of the Author, (which indeed is not neceſſary in any place where his Name is known) yet I take it to be a point of Juſtice to him, and to the World, to ſay thus much of his Work; that this Sermon was preached in a Country-Church (I am perſwaded) without the leaſt Deſign of being made Publick; and that the Copy was written out and ſent to the Preſs (though not without the leave, yet) in the Abſence of the Author: ſo that the Judicious will eaſily believe, with what Advantage it would have come forth, if it had been on purpoſe prepared for publick view, and the Copy had been corrected by the Author's own Hand. Upon the whole, ſeeing the Author has withdrawn his Name; you muſt*

Form of Prayer for the Monthly Faſt. A. D. 1690.

must ascribe all the Praise to the Grace and Assistance of our coming Saviour, *and all the Faults to the poor* Publisher, *who having nothing of his own worth offering, is glad that he has credit enough to borrow such a Piece, to cast into the Treasury: and does only beg this great Bounty, That when any Souls are raised into a lively frame by this Sermon, and are blessing God for the Author, they would also put up one Prayer or Groan for the quickning of him, who was instrumental of conveying it unto them.*

R. M.

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A

SERMON

On St. Mat. 25. 1, 2, to 13.

Then ſhall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened to ten Virgins, which took their Lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

And five of them were wiſe, and five were fooliſh.

They that were fooliſh, took their Lamps, and took no Oil with them.

But the wiſe took Oil in their Veſſels, with their Lamps.

While the Bridegroom tarried, they all ſlumber'd and ſlept.

And at Midnight there was a Cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh, go you out to meet him.

Then all thoſe Virgins aroſe, and trimmed their Lamps.

And the fooliſh ſaid unto the Wiſe, Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out.

But the wiſe anſwered, ſaying, Not ſo; leſt there be not enough for us and you; but go you rather to them that ſell, and buy for your ſelves.

And whilſt they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready, went in with him to the Marriage, and the Door was ſhut.

Afterward came alſo the other Virgins, ſaying, Lord, Lord, open to us.

But

But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the Day nor the Hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.

HERE is an awful Parable, and it is Christ's Parable; and surely you should very much desire, that none of you, nor yours, should be of these *foolish Virgins. The Door is shut*, some shut in, and some shut out; either you will be shut in or out. It mightily concerns us all: And if we would know the meaning, we must have our Saviour's Key, Ver. 13. *Watch therefore, for you know neither the Day nor the Hour when the Son of Man cometh.*

Quest. The great Question is, What is meant by the *coming of the Son of Man?*

Answ. 1. In the first place, when any one dieth, *the Son of Man cometh* to that Man. The Body's *Dying-day*, is the Soul's *Doomsday.* There is a particular Judgment, and then the Soul is either shut into Heaven, or shut out of Heaven. The Parable may be applied to this; and this agrees with other Scriptures.

And the Doctrine raised from it, is,

That Death to a Saint, is the Soul's Marriage to Christ; and to a Sinner, is the Soul's everlasting Divorce from Christ.

2. The *Son of Man cometh* to judg the Quick and the Dead. It is an Article of our Belief, that we must adhere to. There will be a Separation; the Sheep and the Goats parted: *These shall go away into everlasting Punishment*, (cry to God, that it may not be your Portion, nor the Portion of your Children) *but the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

3. But the proper immediate Sense is seen by the Context. You often read of the *Coming of the Son of Man*, in the foregoing Chapter and the Discourse is continued in this Chapter, St. *Mat.* 24. 27.—*So shall the Coming of the Son of Man be.* Ver. 30.—

They

They ſhall ſee the Son of Man come in the Clouds.—Ver.37.39. You have the ſame words. Ver.42,44. *You know not what Hour the Son of Man cometh.*—Still the Queſtion is, What the meaning of this ſhould be? Theſe things are ſpoken in the Anſwer to the Diſciples Queſtion, Ver. 3.—*Tell us, when ſhall theſe things be? and what ſhall be the Sign of thy Coming, and of the End of the World?*

Here are three Queſtions: 1. *When ſhall theſe things be?* viz. *When there ſhall not be left one Stone upon another*, in the Temple? 2. *What is the Sign of thy Coming?* What is the Sign *of the End of the World?*

Our Saviour anſwers to theſe three Queſtions diſtinctly.

He ſpeaks to the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, from *ver.*4,to *v.*27.

Then to the Signs of his Coming, *ver.* 27. this is carried on throughout that Chapter, and a great way into this 25*th*, eſpecially as far as this Parable goes: For in the Application, *ver.*13. he is upon the ſame Subject, *viz. The Coming of the Son of Man.*

Then in the Concluſion he ſpeaks to the End of the World.

But of what ſort of *Coming of the Son of Man* is it? You muſt compare Text with Text, and Place with Place. Turn to *Daniel* 7. there you read of the *Coming of the Son of Man*; (and I remember not whether the Phraſe be uſed in the Old Teſtament, before this place). Ver. 13. *I ſaw in the Night-Viſions, one like the Son of Man came in the Clouds of Heaven.*—He appeared to *Daniel*, as *the Son of Man:* and he appeared *coming in the Clouds of Heaven.* Compare this with *Mat.*24.30.—*And they ſhall ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds of Heaven.*—Now go on in *Daniel*,—*He came to the Ancient of Days, (i. e.* to God the Father)—*And there was given him Dominion and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all People, Nations and Languages ſhould ſerve him: His Dominion is an Everlaſting Dominion, which ſhall not paſs away.*—Here is one like the Son of Man that receives a Kingdom—This muſt be in this World: for in the *End* of the World, *the Son gives up the Kingdom to the Father*, 1 Cor. 15. 24. Chriſt has a Kingdom in this World, and

all People, Nations and Languages ſerve him: That as *all People, Nations and Languages* ſerv'd *Nebuchadnezzar*, &c. ſo now the People of ſeveral Countries ſhall ſerve Chriſt. *His Dominion is an Everlaſting Dominion,—his Dominion ſuch as ſhall never paſs away*, i. e. not as other Kingdoms have done before. He had ſhewn how the *Babylonian, Perſian*, &c. Kingdoms *paſt away*, but this Kingdom doth not paſs away. Now ſee *Rev.* 11. 15. *The ſeventh Angel ſounded, and there were great Voices in Heaven, ſaying, The Kingdoms of this World are become the Kingdoms of the Lord, and of his Chriſt.*—The Kingdoms of the World, are not in this ſpecial ſenſe the Kingdoms of Chriſt now; but they become ſo, when *the ſeventh Angel ſound*, i. e. When *the Times of the Gentiles ſhall be fulfilled*, Chriſt will have a Kingdom in this World: As the Lord liveth, he will reign here upon the Earth, and his *Enemies ſhall be ſlain before him:* He will cut his way through to his Kingdom, by ſlaying Millions of Blaſphemers, Swearers, Sabbath-breakers, *&c. Here are Thunders and Ligtnings, and a great Earthquake, ſuch as was not ſince Men were upon the Earth; ſo mighty an Earthquake, and ſo great*, Rev. 16. 18. Such a Change as never was before. If thou art a Swearer, a Drunkard, a Devil againſt the Power of Godlineſs, repent quickly, or thou art in Hell quickly; for Chriſt is coming, the Earthquake is begun. This 18*th* Verſe, with what follows, ſeems to be an *Appendix* to the fifth Vial, [on the Seat of the Beaſt] as appears, by comparing *ver.* 21, with *ver.* 11. therein *Great* Babylon (*i. e.* Rome) *came into remembrance before God:* But before this, *ver.* 19. *The great City was divided into three parts, and the Cities of the Nations fell*, &c. The great City is diſtinct from *Babylon*, and ſo muſt mean the Roman Territory. This *great City* muſt *be divided into three parts*; this is done before your Eyes: The *German* Faction, the *French* Faction, and the *Italian* or Papal Faction: And *the Cities of the Nations fall*; *Spire, Worms, Openheim*, &c. So the Earthquake is begun; that iſſues in the Ruin of *Babylon*; and on the Aſhes of *Babylon* is Chriſt's Kingdom erected.

Queſt.

Queſt. But will it be a Perſonal Reign?

Anſw. *There was given him Dominion*, &c. *Dan.* 7. *and* ver. 22.—*Judgment was given to the Saints of the moſt High*; *and the time came that the Saints poſſeſſed the Kingdom.* And, *ver.* 27. *The Kingdom and Dominion, and the Greatneſs of the Kingdom under the whole Heaven* (mind, this is not Heaven, but under the Heaven) *ſhall be given to the Saints*, &c. So that the Affairs of Chriſt's Kingdom will be viſibly managed by his *Saints*, by his ſpecial Inſpiration: And Chriſt will do that, which no other Kings have been able to accompliſh: They endeavoured to bring all their Subjects to their *Way* and *Perſwaſion:* But Chriſt will ſway a Scepter in the *Conſciences* of his People. There will be *Unity* without *Diviſion*, *Verity* without *Error*, *Spirituality* without *Formality*, *Hypocriſy* or *Cenſure.*

I beſeech you to ſubmit your ſelves to the Word: *Daniel* ſaith, Chriſt comes *in the Clouds* to take *a Kingdom.* Our *Saviour* ſaith the ſame, *Mat.* 24.—*He will come in the Clouds*, and then *the Tribes of the Earth ſhall mourn*; *i. e.* The Jews ſhall penitently mourn, and then Chriſt enters upon his Kingdom. A little to prove this, ſee *Rev.* 1. 7. *Behold, he cometh with Clouds*; *and every Eye ſhall ſee him, and they* [*even they*] *which pierced him: and all the Kindreds of the Earth ſhall wail becauſe of him. They which pierced him*, i. e. the Jews that have pierced him with their Blaſphemies, as their Fathers did on the Croſs. Chriſt appears in the Clouds, and the firſt thing done, is the Call of the Jews. Chriſt will appear, (I do not ſay, He will dwell upon the Earth, but He will appear in the ſight of the Jews;) *Every Eye ſhall ſee him.* It may be you think this is meant of the Day of Judgment: No; compare this with *Zech.* 12. 10. *I will pour on the Houſe of* David, *and on the Inhabitants of* Jeruſalem, *the Spirit of Grace and Supplications*; *and they ſhall look on me whom they have pierced*; *and they ſhall mourn for him*, &c. Compare theſe two Texts together. In one place you read, *The Kindreds of the Earth*; In the other, *The Houſe of* David, *&c.* they are

the ſame. In one place, *They ſhall look up to him*; in the other, *They ſhall ſee him.* In one place, *They ſhall mourn*; in the other, *They ſhall wail*, &c. Now *Zechary* ſaith, This is the Effect of the Spirit of Grace and Supplications. This *wailing* is not therefore the howling of Caſt-a-ways, but the penitent wailing of poor Souls, through the Spirit of God.

Daniel ſaith, Chriſt *comes in the Clouds*: So ſaith Chriſt, *Mat.* 24.—And that *the Tribes of the Earth ſhall mourn.* So ſaith S. *John*, Rev. 1. This *Zechary* ſaith, is the penitent Mourning or Converſion of the Jews, and this is immediately upon the Deſtruction of *Babylon.* St. *Mat.* 24. 29, 30. *Immediately after the Tribulation of thoſe days, the Sun ſhall be darkened, and the Moon ſhall not give her Light*, &c. *And then ſhall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven, and all the Tribes of the Earth ſhall mourn*, &c.

Here you find,

1. That there will be a *Tribulation.* This goes before the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, it comes on the Proteſtant Churches. Repent quickly.

2. *Immediately after this, the Sun is darkned*, &c. This is an Overthrow of an Empire, which is of the fourth Great Empire, [the Papal Empire, the Pope's having the Fag-end of the Roman Empire.] Compare this with *Iſaiah* 13. 10. *The Stars of Heaven, and the Conſtellations thereof ſhall not give their Light*, &c. Which ſignifies the Deſtruction of *Literal Babylon*; and here are the ſame Expreſſions, meaning the Deſtruction of *Myſtical Babylon.* Mr. *Broughton*, diſcourſing with a Jew, asked him the meaning of the *darkening of the Sun*, &c. The *Rabbi* told him, it always meaneth *the Overthrow of a State.*

3. Then comes the Converſion of the Jews: the *appearance of the Son of Man, the Tribes mourning*, &c. Now when the Son of Man is come, we find, *ver.*40. that *then ſhall two be in the Field, the one ſhall be taken, and the other left.* Beg, that you, your Friends, and Children, may be taken, and not left. Here will

will be a World of People deſtroyed: *Who ſhall live when God does this? Who may abide the Day of his coming?* Theſe things are at the Door. For further Satisfaction, That Chriſt's Coming is to ſet up his Kingdom, turn to St. *Luke* 21. (I ſpeak not theſe things to amuſe you, but for the Good of your Souls, and Honour of our Redeemer) Ver. 24. *They ſhall fall by the edge of the Sword, and ſhall be led away Captive into all Nations*; i. e. The Jews ſhall be ſcattered, *and Jeruſalem ſhall be trodden down of the Gentiles*; *i. e.* firſt by the Romans, and now by Turks, *until the Times of the Gentiles be fulfilled.* Ver. 25. *And then ſhall be Signs in the Sun, and in the Moon, and in the Stars, Diſtreſs of Nations*, &c. Ver. 27. *And then ſhall they ſee the Son of Man coming in the Clouds*, &c. Ver. 28.—*Then lift up your Heads, for your Redemption draws nigh.* Before, *ver.* 24. he ſpeaks of the Jews *being led Captive.* Now, *ver.* 28. he ſpeaks of *Redemption drawing nigh*; *viz.* of the Captive Jews. Now it follows, *ver.* 29, 30, 31. *Learn a Parable of the Figtree, and all Trees*; *when they ſhoot forth, you ſee that Summer is nigh: ſo when you ſee theſe things come to paſs, know ye that the Kingdom of God is nigh at hand. So that the Redemption of the Jews is the Kingdom of God.* I ſhould be loth to ſpeak what is a little abſtruſe, but who can hold his Peace?

Chriſt's Coming is to ſet up his Kingdom amongſt Jews and Gentiles, which will be a glorious time; but dreadful Tribulations make way for it; which in part is come to paſs, as to what is come upon the Turks. There is a courſe of Tribulations, and they run ſwift: ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, *Surely I come quickly:* The Lord will be here in a ſhort time; and *every Eye ſhall ſee him.* Happy they that can ſay, *This is our God, we have waited for him.* A little before this, all will be ſenſible of it; there will be a *loud Cry at Midnight*; *Behold, he comes:* This will be no Notion then: *Watch therefore, for you know neither the Day nor the Hour when the Son of Man cometh.* *Watch* in a way of Expectation, and in a way of Preparation, that he may come to you as a *Friend* in the Day, not *as a Thief in the Night.* Having

Having ſaid this, let us go to the Parable.

Then ſhall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened to Ten Virgins, &c. Here is a manifeſt Alluſion to a *Wedding*. When Chriſt comes to ſet up his *Kingdom*, the firſt thing is the Converſion of the Jews, which is called a Marriage in ſeveral places. Here is a Repreſentation of a Slaughter of Chriſt's Enemies, which is not uſual at a *Wedding*; but at the Entrance of a *King* into a *Kingdom* it is. They go together: He comes as a *King*, and as a *Bridegroom*. The Jews *Weddings* were kept in the Night; the *Bride* ſtays at home; the *Bridegroom* goes to fetch the *Bride*; then the *Bride-maids* go forth to meet him; and it being in the Night, they have lighted Lamps in their Hands; and ſo go in with him to the Marriage-Feaſt. The *Bridegroom* is Jeſus Chriſt; the *Bride* is the Church of God: What is that? Why, you'l ſay, all the true-hearted People of God. It is true, all God's People are the Church: But if you make this to be the *Bride*, who are the *wiſe Virgins?* Are not they the People of God too? For this and other reaſons, I conceive, that tho the whole Church is Chriſt's Spouſe, yet here is meant a particular Church: by the *Bride* therefore we underſtand the Church of the Jews. There is a great deal Scripture for this, in *Pſal.* 45. in the Book of *Solomon's* Song; eſpecially *Rev.* 19. 7, 8, 9. *Let us be glad and rejoice, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her ſelf ready*, &c. In this Chapter we read of *the judging the great Whore*; there is *Hallelujah* for that; then another *Hallelujah, that the Lord reigns: His Marriage is come*, which is the Converſion of the Jews: *His Wife hath made her ſelf ready*. How could ſhe make her ſelf ready? Why, *ver.* 8. *To her it was granted, that ſhe ſhould be arrayed in fine Linnen clean and white.*—The Book of the *Revelation* is a Book of Prophecy, that ſets down things that happen orderly one after another. When *Rome* is fallen, then Chriſt appears for the Converſion of the Jews: They put on the *fine Linnen clean and white; for the fine Linnen is the Righteouſneſs of Saints*; *i. e.* the

the Righteouſneſs of Chriſt put on by the Saints. But why is this underſtood of the Jews? For this, ſee *Rev.* 21. 9, 10.—*Come hither, and I will ſhew thee the Bride, the Lamb's Wife. And —he ſhewed me the New* Jeruſalem *deſcending out of Heaven from God.* This is not Heaven, but ſomething *deſcending out of Heaven.* And obſerve what was written on the Gates, *ver.* 12. *The Names written thereon, are the Names of the twelve Tribes of the Children of* Iſrael; as a Man's Name is written on his Gate; Ver. 14. *And the Wall had twelve Foundations, and in them the Names of the twelve Apoſtles of the Lamb.* Now the *Jews* are grounded on the Doctrine of the *Apoſtles*; ſo they are the Bride; Now, *chap.* 19. 9.—*Bleſſed are they which are called to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb,*—*i. e.* the *Bride-maids.*

In the Parable the *Bride* doth not appear; for therein is repreſented the State of the *Gentiles*, and ſomething that will happen to them before the Converſion of the *Jews.* The *Jews* are now in their Synagogues blaſpheming: but the Lord is coming to call them; and here is an Alarm to awaken the Virgins; The Lord is coming.

Queſt. *Who are theſe Virgins?*

Anſw. 1. They are *Gentiles.*

2. They are Chriſtian Gentiles, *They go forth to meet the Bridegroom*; they have reſpect to Chriſt; ſo they muſt be either Proteſtants (taking the Word in a large Senſe) or Papiſts. Now,

3. Theſe are Proteſtant Gentiles. Compare this with *Rev.* 14. 4. *Theſe were not defiled with Women, for they are Virgins*; It was ſpoken of the 144000 redeemed from Popery. Now ſee *Rev.* 17. 5.—*Mother of Harlots.*—*Rome* is the Mother of Harlots; Popiſh Churches are Harlots, and Proteſtant Churches are Virgins.

Now theſe are of two ſorts:

1. Carnal graceleſs Proteſtants.
2. Spiritual gracious Proteſtants.

Theſe

These make up the wise and foolish Virgins: some have only a Lamp of Profession; some Oil of Grace: These *go forth to meet the Bridegroom.*

This was, I suppose, when Protestancy became the Religion of Kings and Nations, and was visible in the World: Rev. 14. 12. *Here is the Patience of the Saints; here are they that keep the Commandments of God, and the Faith of Jesus, i. e.* the Protestants: a People that cleave to the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, (called *the Commandments of God, and Faith of Jesus.*) Now here is ὑπομονη, the Expectation *of the Saints; i. e.* the time of their going forth to meet the Bridegroom.

These Protestants fall asleep; *While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbred and slept:* There they lie slumbering and sleeping till there came a *loud Cry at Midnight*; and then they look for their Lamps, and happy they that have Oil: This speaks to us all.

Two things I take notice of:

1. Their slumbering: *The Virgins are asleep.*

2. The loud Cry that is then made: *They that are under the Midnight-Slumber, will be awakened with the Midnight-Cry.*

Doct. 1. *The Virgins are asleep:* It were well if it were not so, but it is so; go where you will, and you will find it so: Congregations, Towns, Villages, particular Persons, they are all asleep: People should be watching and praying, and they are asleep. You'll say, we are not asleep. Ay, but your Hearts are asleep; and 'tis a Midnight-Sleep, which is the fastest; the World is in a deep Sleep. These Days are compared by Christ himself to the Days of *Noah* and *Lot*, Luke 17.—*They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded.*—Why, is there any hurt in these things? No; but they minded these things and nothing else; People are *eating and drinking*, &c. *i. e.* carnally secure; they mind their worldly Business, but where is the Sabbath-keeping, and Sense of a God? They pay respect to others, but where is their respect to God and his Worship?

O what a dead Sleep is on the Hearts of poor Creatures! We are got to the Lees of the Church of *Sardis*, Rev. 3. 1. *To the Angel of the Church of* Sardis, *Write—Thou haſt a Name, that thou liveſt, and art dead*; this means us: Not our Fore-fathers, nor them that come after us, but us that ſtand here before God: It's ſpoken of *England* and this Country, and this Town and Congregation. This is a prophetical Book, and theſe are prophetical Epiſtles. The Epiſtle before is to *Thyatria*, *i. e.* the Church under Popery: Then comes in the Reformation, and that is in the Epiſtle to *Sardis*: Then comes *Philadelphia*, when the Jews are converted. Now I ſpeak to them that are ſpiritually wiſe: Can here be an apter Character of us, *Thou haſt a Name to live?* Oh! we are of the Church, and for the Church; *but thou art dead*; they hear, but they are dead; pray, but are dead; receive Sacraments, but are dead: Dreadful! but true; there is no Life left: They that have a little Life are ſenſible of it. Three things are ſpoken of *Sardis*: *Thou haſt a Name to live, and art dead.—Remember therefore how thou haſt received*, (they have forgotten the Doctrines received in the Reformation) *and repent*: noting the Corruptions in manners. *They are dead in Worſhip, decayed in Doctrine, defective in Manners.* There was Life; but what a formal People are we become? Here has been ſound Doctrine, but how has Arminianiſm overſpread the Land? And for Corruptions in Manners; *O that my Head were Waters, and mine Eyes Fountains of Tears*, to bewail the Debauchery of the Land! And ſince the *Hand of God has been lifted up* amongſt us, People have had *ſeven Spirits in them worſe* than before; more of Malignity and *Envy at the People of God* than ever: What will this come to? *ver.* 4. *I will come on thee as a Thief, and thou ſhalt not know what Hour I will come upon thee.* As the Lord liveth, it will be ſo: Yea, the wiſe Virgins cannot excuſe themſelves. How canſt thou ſay, thou art not dead? *Jer.* 2. 23. You'll ſay, it is our Grief we are ſo dead. It is well it is your Grief, then it ſhall not be your Ruin. How

dead are many with reſpect to Chriſt's Kingdom! There are many Chriſtians that ſcarce think of it. Others allow that ſuch a State will be; but if you ſpeak of it in its Noon-tide Glory, the wonderful and abiding Preſence of God, the Immunities and Priviledges of the Saints, they cannot believe it will riſe ſo high. Tell them, it will be *Kingdom of God*; that there will be no more *Death*, (Death being put for Peſtilence or Perſecution) nor *Sorrow*, nor *Crying*, nor *Pain*, for ſo ſaith the Scripture: *Rev.* 21. 4. tell them of the high frame that the People of God will be in, when *God himſelf is the Temple*; you cannot perſwade them of it: and tell them, that all this is near: who thinks of it? Chriſt is about it, and he proteſts he *is coming quickly*; yet the precious People of God do not think of this. It is a dead ſleepy time. If the Children of *Iſrael* will not believe, what will become of *Pharaoh*? It is Midnight-Sleep. If there be a great Noiſe in a Room on one ſide, and on the other, and a Man aſleep in the middle, you'll ſay, it is a Midnight-Sleep indeed. How did our Fathers weep over the *Palatinate*, when it was but a light ſtroke? But we have had Thundrings and Lightnings, and we are ſlumbering. What a Noiſe is there in *Flanders*, and in *Ireland*, and we in *England* between them are aſleep! Miniſters come with a Call, to repent, to humble your ſelves, (you muſt be ſerious, or you'll never be ſaved); Call upon Call, and there is no Anſwer: It is a ſign you are aſleep; put this amongſt the Signs that Chriſt is near. We cannot ſay, Chriſt comes this Night, or Next: *The Day and Hour knoweth no Man*; but it is near, when you ſee ſuch things come to paſs:

Such a Blow given the Turks. (*Rev.* 11. 14.)

Such an Earthquake and Diviſion of the Papal World. (*Rev.* 16. 18.)

Such a Conſpiracy of two Popiſh Kings, to give up their Kingdom to the Beaſt again. (*Rev.* 17. 17.)

Such a Tribulation on the People of God, (*Mat.* 24. 29.) then

then the Lord will be here wonderful quickly; he comes with infinite ſpeed; as he lives, he loves; as he loves, he comes; as he comes, he comes quickly: All the World will be convinc'd, that he comes wonderful quickly.

The Signs are:

The Nations are ſhaken:	*Envy is boiling:*
The Devil is roaring:	*The Papiſts are raging:*
The Turks are falling:*	*The Elect are crying.*

* *i. e.* Scorch'd with a great Heat by a Power given the Sun, *viz.* the German Emperor. See the 4*th* Vial, *Rev.* 16. there being another Vial (*viz.* the 6*th*) to be poured out on the Euphratean Turk.

To which we may add:

The Virgins are ſleeping; and, *The Lord is coming.*

And they ſay, It will be a great while firſt: but they *ſlander the Footſteps of God's Anointed:* He ſaith, *Surely I come quickly*; and it was his parting Word. Do you not perceive that the Lord is about his Work? the World is in that poſture, that it was to be in juſt before the Appearance of Chriſt. You'll ſay, Why then do not People believe it? Why, they are aſleep, and it is a Midnight-Sleep. But here will be a loud Cry.

Doct. 2. *They that are under the Midnight-Slumber, ſhall be awakened by a Midnight-Cry.* Here will be a Midnight-Cry in the Land. I beſeech you obſerve it: The Virgins are Proteſtants, and Proteſtants ſlumbering and ſleeping; this is before the Downfal of *Babylon*, that they are awakened: This thing will be thundered into the Conſciences of drouzy Proteſtants; and *they that will not ſee, ſhall ſee.*

But what is this Midnight-Cry? See *Exod.* 12. 29, 30. *It came to paſs, that at Midnight the Lord ſmote all the Firſt-born of* Egypt.——*And there was a great* CRY *in* Egypt,——Here

is a *Cry*, and a great *Cry*, and an awakening *Cry*; and they lie in their Beds till this great Cry; but then they are called up; *Pharaoh aroſe in the Night, He and all his Servants, and all the Egyptians.* Why did they go to Bed? Becauſe they were carnally ſecure, God had told them of it before, *Chap.* 11. 4, 5, 6. ——*About Midnight I will go out into the midſt of* Egypt,—— *and there ſhall be a Cry*, &c. God ſpeaks this to the Proteſtant Lands: There will be a *Midnight-Cry*, and all will be awakened. So it will be in *England*. *Rev.* 3. 3. *Sardis* repreſents the Proteſtant Churches, and particularly this:—*I will come on thee like a Thief*, &c. *I will* come: Who ſhall ſtop him then? It will certainly be ſo. His Coming will be like that of a *Thief*, *ſudden, certain, formidable, ſurprizing. The Thief cometh not but for to ſteal, and to kill, and to deſtroy.* This is, you'll ſay, *if they do not watch.* Ay, who watcheth? And mind, *Thou haſt a few Names even in* Sardis, there are but few that eſcape.

The *Midnight-Cry* doth ſignify a terrible Judgment on the *Proteſtants*, a great Tribulation, which will be by the *Papiſts*. Rev. 11. 2. *The outer Court is given to the Gentiles*, i. e. the *Papiſts*. You believe that *Babylon* will fall, and you pray for it. But how will it fall? Why, upon a Provocation that ſhe will give: Rev. 18. 6. *Reward her as ſhe hath rewarded you, and double unto her double.—In the Cup which ſhe hath filled, fill to her double.* Out of this Land will go forth the *Faithful*, *Called* and *Choſen*, together with the People of God in other Countries, and they will fill to *Babylon double* in *the Cup* ſhe ſhall *fill to them:* She will put a *Cup* into the Proteſtants Hands, and will be made to pledg it *double.*

This Cup will awaken the ſleepy Proteſtants. The Scripture ſaith, *Equity cannot enter*, Iſa. 59. 41. therefore an Enemy ſhall. Nothing but the Spirit of God can defend the People of God; for the Slaughter will be grievous. *Iſa.* 24. there you read of a *Deſolation*, (no body thinks of it hardly, but) *God hath ſpoken the Word.* Ver. 3. *The Land ſhall be utterly ſpoiled.*

ſpoiled. Ver. 6. *The Inhabitants of the Earth are burned, and few Men left:*——*and abundance more then.* Ver. 10. *The City of Confuſion* (*Heb.* Vanity) *is broken down*, &c. Ver. 23. *Then the Moon ſhall be confounded, and the Sun aſhamed, when the Lord of Hoſts ſhall reign in Mount Zion*, &c. This is the Key that opens the whole Chapter.

The Tribulation goes before the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, and the glorious State.

Then the next Chapter is *a Song of Praiſe* for this; Chap. 25. 2, 3, 4. *Thou haſt made of a City an Heap*, (this is the Praiſe of the whole Church of God) *A Palace of Strangers to be no City.*—*Therefore ſhall the ſtrong People glorify Thee, the City of the terrible Nations ſhall fear Thee, for thou haſt been a Strength to the Poor:*—*Thou ſhalt bring down the Noiſe of Strangers, the Branch of the terrible Ones ſhall be brought low. Obſerve*, Here is a *City* called a *Palace of Strangers* that is ruin'd; the Church doth in a holy manner triumph over it. What City muſt this be? There is no City that is ſuch an univerſal Enemy to the Church of God, a Stumbling-block to the Jews, and Plague to the Proteſtants, as *Rome* is. Now in *Songs of Praiſe*, the Church ſings to the Glory of God, his Attributes and Works; how he carries them on before they are compleated: So here, the Prophet reflects on the downfall of this *City*; Ver. 3.—*The City of the terrible Nations ſhall fear Thee:* It ſhall ſtrike a Terrour into the terrible Nations. Now obſerve, *Ver.* 4. which comes to our Caſe, *Thou haſt been a Strength to the Poor, a Strength to the Needy in his Diſtreſs, a Refuge from the Storm, a Shadow from the Heat, when the blaſt of the terrible Ones is as a Storm againſt the Wall.* Then Ver. 5.—*The Branch of the terrible Ones is brought low.* Here are the terrible Ones that are terrify'd themſelves; therefore before this they ſhew themſelves ſo terrible. The Tribulation

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is compared to a *Storm* and to a *Heat*; then God is a Refuge to the Poor, and Strength to the Needy: *Miſerum eſt cum ventum eſt ad Deos.* We ſay of ſuch a one, He is ruin'd, if God does not help him. The Storm is exceeding great on them that have not a God to ſave them; ſuch a *Storm* that nothing but a God can *ſhelter* a Man from it; ſuch a *Heat* as will burn them to Aſhes, if God be not their *Shadow.* But *God is a Strength to the Poor*; God's People are called *poor*, eſpecially at this time. Here will be a *Storm* on the Land, and it will be by the terrible Ones, *i. e.* the *Papiſts*, and terrible *Papiſts:* One would think by ſuch a *Branch* as hath been ſo terrible to others. There will be a *Storm* and *Heat*, and the poor People of God are under a Refuge. Nothing will keep you but God: See that you have a God, an Intereſt in Chriſt. Compare this with *Iſa.* 26. 5, 6. there is another *Song* for theſe glorious things: *He bringeth down them that dwell on high, the lofty City he layeth it low.—— The Foot ſhall tread it down, even the Feet of the Poor, and the Steps of the Needy.* Why, were not they all deſtroyed by the Storm before? No, God *preſerved* them, and *reſerved* them to be his Inſtruments in the Deſtruction of *Babylon*, a precious People, that have been trodden under foot, *Called, Choſen*, and *Faithful.*

But, how comes this to concern us here in *England?* Why, yes; No Nation more than this. Rev. 17. 16. *The ten Horns which thou ſaweſt upon the Beaſt, theſe ſhall hate the Whore.——* The Inſtruments are out of *England*; for *England* is one of the Horns, as all agree. Here will ariſe a People out of *England*, hated for Chriſt's Sake, that are made uſe of: they are called *Poor and Needy*; and are miraculouſly *preſerved* by a God that *ſhadows* them, or elſe they had been deſtroyed too. Here is a *Storm* and *Heat* that deſtroys a world of People. How come the People of God then to eſcape more than others?

thers? Why, St. Peter ſaith, *The Lord knows how to deliver his People :*——and, he has given his Royal Word for it. See that you are in Chriſt, look to it. Here will be a Storm, and this is to be expected every day. This is the *Midnight-Cry*, or the occaſion of the *Midnight-Cry :* And this *Storm* and *Tribulation* Alarms the *drowſy Virgins*; they that are *ſleeping* at *Midnight*, (as moſt are) are *awakened.*

Firſt, It will be a *general* awakening. *Verſ. 7. Then all thoſe Virgins aroſe.*——

Secondly, (Which is miraculous) they will ſo *awake* as never to *ſleep* more; this would even pierce ones Heart. Some are kept *awake* by *Terror*; ſome by *Joy*. We had a *Midnight-Cry* a Year and half ago, but People are *aſleep* again. That was *Rumour*, but this is *Rumour* and *Violence*. Jer. 51. 46.

Thirdly, At this *Cry*, All will come to be of one Mind, as to theſe things following.

1. That the *Bridegroom* is coming: That none is glorious but Chriſt, and they that are Chriſt's. They are all ſenſible of it now; we did not think it would ever be ſo, but now we ſee it.

2. They are *all* ſearching their *Lamps* for *Oyl :* One ſearcheth and finds no Oil, or little Oil in the Lamp, but in the Veſſels there is ſome: but the other looks into the Lamp, and there is no Oil; into the Veſſels, and there is none neither: There is great ſearching of Conſcience then.

3. They are *all trimming their Lamps*; this is the ſcouring the Lamp: not pouring in *Oil*, for the *fooliſh Virgins* had no *Oil*; but ſcouring the *outſide* of the *Lamp*; and this they are all at work at. It is ſome outward performance of Duty, that they

they all agree in. *Gentlemen* leave their Hawks and Hounds; *Country-Men* their Grounds, and *Tradeſmen* their Shops, and run to their *Prayer-Books*, and *Practice of Piety*, and all the Nation is in a wonderful Religious Poſture.

4. They *all* have an high eſteem for *Oil*; All the World for a little *Oil!* Gold and Silver is nothing. We have provided for ſuch a Child, and laid up ſuch an Eſtate: worldly Projects took up our Thoughts; theſe kept out Chriſt and the Spirit: now theſe are all cut off, *Lands*, and *Stocks*, and *Flocks*, there is an end of all theſe. Oh! A thouſand Worlds for *Oil*; Union with Chriſt, Communion with Chriſt: Oh! for Chriſt and Grace.

5. They *all* agree that a *Lamp* will not do without *Oil*. Before they thought a *Lamp* was enough. *We are for the Church; we'll live and die in the Church.* This is but a *Lamp:* There muſt be the inward Spirit and Grace. Thou haſt been baptized outwardly, but haſt thou been baptized inwardly? Thou haſt been called by the *Miniſter:* doſt know what it is to be inwardly called? It muſt be ſomething within that muſt ſtick by you. An Image was made to go, and do great things by Springs and Wheels; but one looking in, ſaid, *Deeſt aliquid intus, there wants ſomething within.* People content themſelves with Lamps, but what is there within? *I adjure you by the Lord*, tell me what God has done for your Souls? Tell your ſelves; Are you converted? are you juſtify'd and ſanctify'd? are you not yet in your Sins? You pleaſe your ſelves with coming to Church, but you muſt not reſt in the outward Work, it will not do without Oil within.

Uſe 1. Of Terrour to the *fooliſh Virgins*. Are there any *unjuſtify'd*, *unſanctify'd* ones here, *Swearers*, *Sabbath breakers*, *Drunkards*, *Enemies* to the *Spirit*, *Prayerleſs*, *Graceleſs*? You are in a miſerable condition: Repent quickly, or you'l periſh quickly.

quickly. You'l ſay, *I am young, I may live many Years:* I tell you, you have but a little time to be out of Hell, if you do not repent. Go home, you vain and light Perſons, and repent, elſe if you *are weighed in God's Ballance*, you will be *found wanting:* You are a little *Civil*, and you think you are ſafe, but you muſt be *Spiritual:* The Lord is coming to reckon with the Nation, and with you. Theſe fooliſh Virgins, what a Condition were they in?

1. They are under a great *Conviction*, that they have not *Oil*; *Give us of your Oil, for our Lamps are gone out.* Their Caſe was bad at firſt, but they were not ſenſible of it: they had no Oil before, but now they cry out, when the *loud Cry* comes; then they make a heavy ado, that they have no Grace: why, it is too late, you ſhould have taken notice of it before.

2. Then their Confidence is daſhed; *Our Lamps is gone out.* Why, cannot you ſay your Prayers as you uſed to do? Alas! that will not do now; for mark, God is angry, and *theſe are the Days of Vengeance*; and Conſcience cries, *Thou hateſt ſuch a Miniſter and Chriſtian for his Holineſs, and Strictneſs in his Life and Family. You had Calls, but you ſlighted them; Sabbaths, but you trifled them away:* and now they have no Heart to pray; their Hearts will be dead in them like a Stone; there will be a heavy Cry. Conſcience is now gagg'd, but then it will roar; they that were in preſumption, are now in Deſperation; Sinners, will you ſell your Souls? have you a mind to be damned?

3. Now they would hang upon the *Skirts of the Saints*; *Give us of your Oil.* Now *ſend for* Moſes *and* Aaron *in haſte:* Exod. 12. 31. They cared not for them before. I knew a Holy Man, poor, but good; his Wife was a carnal Creature: when he lay a dying: Ah, ſaid ſhe, that *I might die with thee!* Why ſo, ſaid her Husband; why then ſaid ſhe, *I would hang on thy Skirts.*

4. All the Creatures cannot help them; *the Wiſe* have little enough for themſelves.

5. They *cry*, but it is *too late*, *Eſau*'s Tears: *The Door* in concluſion *is ſhut*, and they are howling with *Dogs without*. *Rev.* 22. 15.

I ſpeak not uncharitably of you, for I know you not: but I am afraid that there are many here that are but *fooliſh Virgins*; you muſt be changed or damned: Here comes a *Storm* that is to be expected every Day, and you ſee what becomes of the *fooliſh Virgins*: Oh! cry Day and Night for Oil; for the *Blood of Sprinkling*, the *Spirit of Sanctification*. Your Time is ſhort, and your Work great.

But you'll ſay, Shall we have no time when the Cry comes? we'll ſtay a little, and ſee how times go; and ſhall we have no time afterward?

I anſwer, Yes, a little time, but not enough; The old World ſtayed to ſee what would come of it: and they had a little time it may be, to get upon a Houſe, upon a Hill or Tree; but it rain'd forty days, *and the Flood came and deſtroyed them all*. The *fooliſh Virgins* had a little time, they went to the Shops; *but while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came*. Oh my Friends out of Chriſt, I wiſh you in Chriſt; you have been deſired to get into Chriſt, but you have not minded theſe things; nothing but the *Lamp*; I tell you again and again, that will not do; ſtay till the loud Cry comes, and you are ruined for ever: There may be a little time, but like a Man in a *Storm*, *you'll reel to and fro, and ſtagger like a drunken Man*; and what, work for your Souls when you are at your *Wits-end?* And one thing more: *Rev.* 22. 10. 11, 12.—*The time is at hand*: *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill*; *and he which*

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is filthy, let him be filthy ſtill.—The ſaddeſt Words in the Bible: It is a prophetical Book, and now *the time is at hand.*: The providential *Tokens* concur with the Scripture, ſo that eſpecially in this *loud Cry*, this takes place; *He that is unjuſt, let him be unjuſt ſtill*, &c. I have done with you, your Leaſe is out, your Day of Grace is expir'd, you are undone for ever. As you love your Souls, your Lives, your little ones, *repent*; you Maſters, repent; you Servants, repent; Sons and Daughters, repent: Do not ſtand it out till the laſt: Lie down in the Duſt, and cry for Mercy; I beſeech you do, or you are ruined for ever: you loſe all if you ſtay a little while longer: Get a *Chriſt* and *Oil*: Husbands, pray for your Wives; Wives, pray for your Husbands: try what a praying Life will do. You'll ſay, I cannot pray. Why, do as well as you can, that God would ſave your Life, and the Life of your little ones, before it be too late.

To my precious Friends *in Chriſt*: You are a happy People, you have *Oil*; bleſſed be God, you have Grace, *the Spirit of Grace*; but I fear it is *Oil* in the Glaſs, not in the Lamp: Methinks I ſee when the *Cry* comes, what a *pouring of Oil* there will be out of *the Veſſel* into *the Lamp*; what a lively frame Chriſtians will be in: *Oil* in the *Veſſel* is *Grace* in *Habit*, *Oil* in the *Lamp* is *Grace* in *Exerciſe*.

1. See that you have *Oil*, that you have not your Evidences to ſeek.

2. See that you have *Oil in the Lamp*, *i. e.* Grace in Act; *If you live in the Spirit, walk in the Spirit*; if you have *Faith*, uſe it; if you have Love, uſe it: as *Luther* ſaid, *Let them pray that can pray.* Many a poor Creature cannot pray, they have hard Hearts, and cannot pray: But you do pray; ay, but not

enough. When we expect a dear Friend, we would have ſomething extraordinary: why, here is Chriſt a coming; What, nothing extraordinary! nothing but what is for the Family! Get your Hearts into a more lively Frame; you have ſpoken to one another, now *ſpeak often one to another:* whereas you *prayed* before, double the File. Do it ſeven times more, and *watch*; *What I ſay unto you, I ſay unto all, Watch.* It is but a little time, cannot you *watch?* as Chriſt ſaid to *Peter, Cannot you watch with me one Hour? q. d.* Did I ever deſire ſo much of you before? I was wont to let you ſleep when I was praying for you, and you ſlept the better for it; but *this one Hour! Could you not watch with me this one Hour?* Be leſs in the World; your Hearts out of the World, and your Hands leſs in it: contract your Buſineſs; do *not regard the Stuff* ſo much: Did we ever ſay ſo much to you before? You'l ſay, when our Lord ſpake thoſe Words, the Enemies were coming. Why, ſo they are now; it is an extraordinary time. *Luke* 21. 36. *Watch you therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to eſcape all theſe things that ſhall come to paſs, and to ſtand before the Son of Man.*

FINIS.